

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and allowance of the present application based on the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Upon entry of the above amendments, claims 15-39, as amended, will be pending. Claims 15, 26-27, and 38 have been amended. New claim 39 has been added. Support for the amendments and new claims may be found throughout the specification. No new matter has been added as a consequence of these amendments.

Claims 15-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. patent 3,676,171 ("Spiller") in view of U.S. patent 6,306,945 (Lepilleur), or Lepilleur in view of Spiller.

The object of the present invention is to provide a powder coating composition that produces a finished coating with desirable properties without excessive levels of titanium dioxide. Applicants submit that the teachings of the cited references, in particular Lepilleur, do not suggest the composition comprising a thermosetting resin and a mixture of titanium dioxide and the zeolite as described in the pending claims of the present invention. Moreover, the teachings of Lepilleur focus solely upon halogen containing polymers which undergo degradation on heating. In fact, Lepilleur does not teach, nor suggest, the combination of zeolite with titanium dioxide as an extender for titanium dioxide in order to improve the opacification characteristics of a powder coating composition. Therefore, Applicants submit that the teachings of the combined references do not teach, much less provide, the necessary motivation to one skilled in the art to prepare compositions of the present invention, as presented in the pending claims.

Similarly, as the combined references do not teach such a combination of titanium dioxide and a zeolite for the purposes of opacification, the method claims of the present invention are both novel and inventive over the disclosure and teachings of said references.

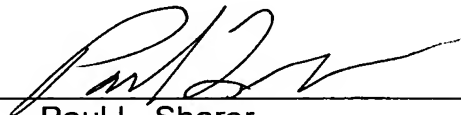
Therefore, all objections and rejections having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in a condition for allowance and a Notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Should any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned attorney for Applicants at the telephone number indicated below in order to expeditiously resolve any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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